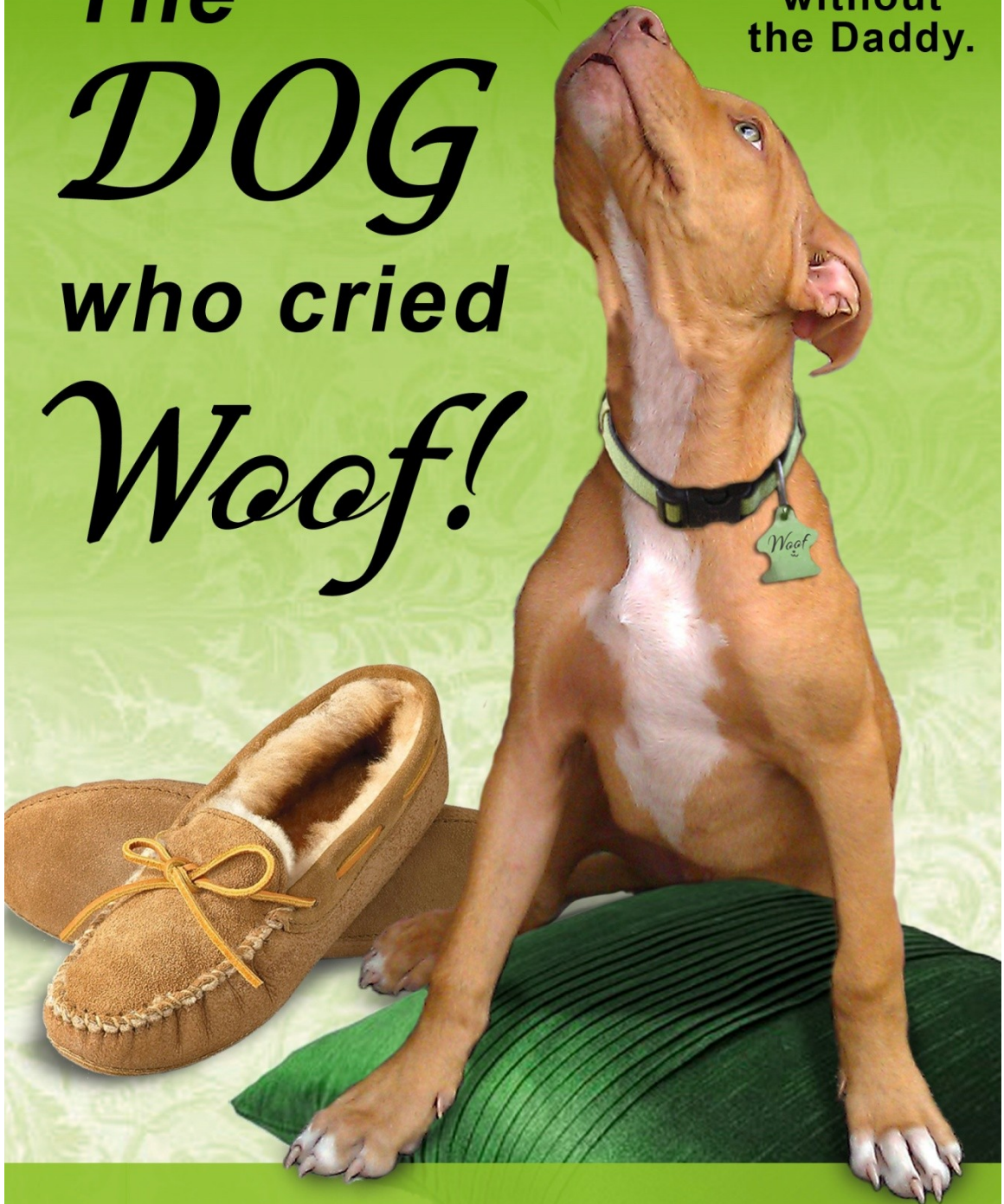


The
DOG
who cried
Woof!

A
Night
without
the Daddy.



Kathleen J. Shields

The Dog who cried *Woof*

A Night without the Daddy

There once was a dog on a mission - a mission to be the first dog in the house to announce Daddy's return. However, that mission was often time consuming and lonely and this left the young dog all by himself. These long bouts of solitude permitted his imagination to run wild.

You see, when my husband works late into the evening our dog doesn't know what to do with himself. He goes upstairs to the prime lookout point for the front gate and lies there watching. Of course he also tends to carry up one of my husband's slippers to keep him company. I've been told these slippers don't stink, but I can't really figure out any other reason a dog would want to snuggle with them in bed.

This young dog took it upon himself to be on lookout - watch dog. He'd sit up there staring out the window for hours. These evenings, after the sun sets, shadows would cast their wild shapes onto the driveway. The wind rustling through the leaves of the trees must make odd noises to a young dog with excellent hearing. As the evening stretches on, dreams of Daddy dance through his head. His heart warms. His muscles relax. And his eye lids droop down.

Now, I'm not sure if it's the shadows of moving critters or the dreams that waft into his mind, but sporadically throughout the evening, this young dog would announce Daddy's return - prematurely.

A long bellowing cry is howled. The "woof" sound carries down the stairs and enters into the other dogs ears. You can hear the young dog leap from the bed like a race horse springing into action. You can feel the galloping across the second floor as another robust woof is cried out in announcement, and by now the other dogs have vocally taken action.

Moist noses and furry paws race towards the downstairs windows. Corresponding cries of enthusiasm and anticipation are announced. The room fills with a roar of fervor that is as wild as a wolf in the woods.

I pause my TV show. I rise from the couch and I too, fight for a small spot in the window to look out and see if it's Daddy arriving home. Yet, as I take my first peek out the window, wagging tails and wiggling butts knocking my legs out from underneath me, I realize – it's a false alarm. Not only is Daddy not home... but there is no one out there – absolutely nothing!

The dogs are at the door. The thrill of the hunt is surging through their veins, and the cries of the “woof” are still echoing through the room. I announce that the young dog had mistaken the arrival, and he may have dreamed of his daddy's arrival. But alas, Daddy's not home, and they should all resume their spots on the couch and continue waiting in silence.

Bummed out and filled with disappointment, the dog who cried woof retreats back to his lookout spot. You can hear each sluggish step, as one by one, he tromps back up the stairs. I listen as he pauses at the side of the bed, droops his head down low and then crawls back into bed. I hear the plop onto the mattress as he resumes his watch, impatiently awaiting Daddy's return.

The house quiets. My TV show resumes and fur babies across the couch slowly fall back into slumber.

The dog who cried woof is propped up on the pillow watching out the window and resumes his contemplative thoughts. He begins to realize something important. It becomes apparent to him that for a short while his adrenaline was flowing. He brought much needed excitement into the house. He was stimulated! The race down the stairs, entering the wild crowd of joy and enthusiasm – it was absolutely thrilling!

As he lay there, watching out the window, smelling Daddy's shoe, sensing his boredom return - a fanatical idea pops into his head. The silence is deafening. The monotony of the wait has returned and the dog who cried woof is certain *HE* is the one who must save the evening! It's his new mission! A self-given

assignment, a challenge so important, an undertaking so profound, that only *he* can accomplish it.

He waits, biding his time. Anticipation and eagerness spiral throughout his body. With eyes wide and pulse quickening, he roars into action. Bounding up with chin held high, he wails a cry that bellows past his snout. The house again erupts into confusion.

The agitation and excitement soaks the fresh air of the room, and again I pause my TV show. The results are reminiscent of the first instance and the volume of barking, howls and woofs is deafening. I again elbow my way into the crowd to glance out the window. I again see nothing. And once again, I must inform the crowd that the dog that cried woof was mistaken. The occurrence is beginning to feel repetitive. Something mischievous is going on here.

Over time and the course of multiple interruptions, I begin to doubt the validity of the announcements by the dog who cried woof. I begin to have reservations on whether he truly is seeing something, anything out there, or if he's doing all of this for attention. I hesitate getting up from the couch – pausing the TV show is a must since I can no longer hear it, but getting up to look out the window... not so much. I'm starting to become frustrated. I loudly proclaim that Daddy's not home, to go lay down and to stop barking. It becomes a problem for everyone involved.

The dog who cried woof's focus is now being drawn away from his duties. The others grumble, then lay down feeling they were led astray. They begin to look at the young dog with annoyance. They resent him for waking them, are annoyed he caused Mommy to yell, and begin to bark their frustration at him.

The dog who cried woof mopes back upstairs with disappointment in his heart. Disheartened that his plans did not go over well, he turns his discouragement onto a nearby squeak toy. Gnashing the toy within his powerful jaws he only becomes more aggravated that it no longer squeaks, and he can't feel that enthrallment of its scream.

With no one watching the window, Daddy rolls in silently. Everyone's inner grumblings and the continuation of the TV show allows their attention to falter. Daddy quietly, stealthily (in their opinion) tip-toes up to the door. His large steel-toe boots gnashing against the rocks aren't heard. If he were a robber he would have gotten away with murder. He steps into the house and announces, "Honey, I'm home!"

Alarmed excitement erupts from the living room as the other dogs race to the door to attack or in this case, greet their Daddy. They leap up on their hind legs to hug him. They bark and kiss his face, and they nearly knock him over from the exhilaration that he's finally home.

The dog who cried woof wants nothing more than to come running down the stairs and join in the delight of his Daddy's return, but the woe is still fresh in his mind from his past indiscretions. Fearful his brothers and sisters will criticize him for not only his false alarms but his failure to properly announce Daddy's arrival. He hides, waiting for Daddy to come looking for him, hopeful he won't be upset.

Daddy greets the others gleefully. He puts his briefcase down and gives everyone kisses. He hands out cookies, and he begins to tell about his day when a small thump tugs at his heart. He looks around. Counts the heads, wagging tails and paws. He realizes... one is missing.

He calls for the dog who cried woof – who is watching from behind the stairs, tail wagging but still hesitant to approach. He calls again, wondering. He looks over to Mommy who gives this coy look and directs her head to the stairs. He calls again, holding up a cookie which is usually enough of an incentive, but not tonight.

Mommy quickly explains the dog who cried woof's story, and then it all becomes clear. With a disapproving look, Daddy approaches the young dog. His tail is wagging in excitement, yet his head lowers seeing his Daddy's scowl. Daddy sits down next to him and begins to talk.

"Mommy says you were causing troubles tonight – fibbing?"

His tail stopped wagging.

“Upsetting your siblings.”

He placed his paw on Daddy’s lap.

“Interrupting Mommy’s TV show.”

He dropped his head down lower.

“What have you learned tonight about telling stories?”

‘*Not to do it.*’ He speaks with his pitiful expression.

“Will you do it again?”

‘*Not tonight.*’ He admits with his smiling eyes, then gives Daddy a kiss on the face.

There should be a moral to every story but with dogs –unfortunately they are perfect and can do no wrong. Those adorable brown puppy dog eyes can look into your soul melting your heart, and suddenly you forget why you were upset with them a moment earlier. Their wagging tails and wiggling butts reveal so much happiness and excitement; you can’t help but forgive them. So, while a moral to the story was intended, it just can’t be done. The dog who cried woof will woof again. It’s a given.

The End

Kathleen J. Shields

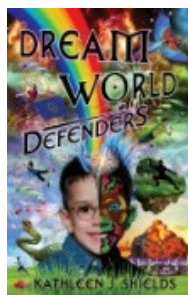
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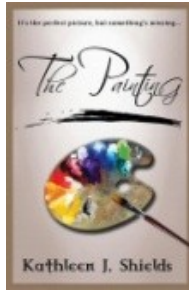
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About the Author



Kathleen J. Shields is an award-winning author having won first place for “Best Educational Children’s Series” from the Texas Association of Authors for the “Hamilton Troll Adventures”. This series is educational and inspirational, teaching young children social skills, animal characteristics and how to handle real-life situations.

While awaiting illustrations, Kathleen loves to write imaginative stories for youth as well as Christian Fiction. Shields’ has 25 published books now, with many more in the works!

During the work week, Shields’ runs Kathleen’s Graphics; a website and graphic design company. She designs colorful, eye-catching websites, custom logos, flyers and advertisements for various businesses and new entrepreneurs. Kathleen also uses her talents to help new authors with formatting, book covers and an online presence for sales and marketing.

Additionally, Kathleen writes an inspirational and educational blog regarding her endeavors as an author, a business woman and Christian.

Her views are always light-hearted and thought-provoking and are intended to get the reader thinking.

For more information about the author, and her books, please visit:

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